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VERSES

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VERSES

BY

EDITH SANDERSON REDFIELD

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By EDITH SANDERSON REDFIELD

Boston

To My Mother

WHOSE HIGH IDEALS AND
SYMPATHY HAVE EVER BEEN
AN INSPIRATION,
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

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FRIENDSHIP.

THE friendship lightly given
Is lightly cast aside;
The friendship deeply riven
Forever will abide.

The friends we meet at midday,
Who bow and smile so sweet,
Are not the friends we send for
When shadows stay our feet.

We would not lose the many
Who sparkle like the dew
In sunshine with their gladness,
And make the world seem new.

Yet these but touch us lightly,
No thrill responsive plays
About the heart at meeting —
We go our separate ways.

The few, how well we know them,
How highly do we prize
Those souls atune to our soul,
Who truly sympathize.

The gain is more than riches
When we have won a friend;
For what is born of spirit
Will last until the end.

Then let no rude wind chill it.
Be tender, kind, and true;
That life is sadly empty
Which does not know the few.

MT. RAINIER,

14,440 FEET.

WRITTEN DURING THE ASCENT.

APOSTROPHE TO MT. RAINIER.

PROUD monarch mountain art thou
  Wrapped in thy mantle white;
Alone in towering splendor
  Thou rul'st by inborn right.

Through ages and through ages
  Thy seaméd face doth show
The scars of mighty conflict,
  Whose fires have burnéd low.

Thy treasures well thou guardest,
  Thy story none doth know,
Thy paths are all untrodden
  'Neath fathoms deep of snow.

The little waves of human-tide
  Dash round thee unperceived;
Thou see'st afar the glory
  Of the perfect plan achieved.

CARBON RIVER.

Carbon River Camp.

CARBON river, Carbon river,
Hastening ever toward the sea,
Stay, oh, stay thy restless chatter,
And commune a while with me.

We are camped upon thy borders,
We have bathed within thy spray;
Yet to-morrow we must leave thee
For we hasten on our way.

Still we'll not forget thee, river,
Thou hast done thy little part;
And thy song we heard at midnight
Long will linger in the heart.

Merry, sparkling, happy river,
Why cannot we learn of thee
To make music out of trials,
Hard and stubborn though they be?

THE VESPER HYMN.

Camp Utopia.

WATCHING from my couch the shadows,
As they darkened all around,
Wondrous chords from nature's fingers
Filled the place with sweetest sound.

Not another heard the music,
Silently the notes were played;
For the music was within me,
And it all my being swayed.

Trees anear and stars above me
Wrought their own especial part,
And the harp-strings that they played on
Were the feelings of my heart.

Wondrous music, to have felt thee
Made life better and more sweet,
Holy, solemn, peaceful music,
In one harmony complete.

Holy :

For the stars of evening
From on high were looking down;
Eyes of angels never weeping,
Joyfully their night watch keeping,
Shadowed not by tear or frown.

Solemn :

For the giant fir trees
Yonder in the darkness stand,
Like grim sentinels on duty,
Mystic, in their silent beauty,
Guardians of the shadow land.

Peaceful :

For in gentle breezes
Comes the soft and balmy air,
Like the breath of love revealing
Soul to soul with naught concealing
Sympathy divinely fair.

WORSHIP.

Camp Excelsior, — Altitude, 8,000 ft.

'TWAS Thursday eve; on all around
A solemn stillness lay;
With reverence we bowed the head
When one said, "Let us pray."

His voice was weak, not much was said,
Yet deeply all were stirred;
For God Himself seemed very near
In every broken word.

And one by one from out full hearts
Each gave some word of love,
Till cold and struggle were forgot —
Earth seemed like Heaven above.

"Nearer my God to Thee" was sung
With every word a prayer;
Then "Rock of Ages," too, went out
Borne upward on the air.

And while we sung and talked and prayed,
The eye was turned oft-time
To yonder mountain top arrayed
In purity sublime.

Majestic in its snowy height,
Silent, alone, and cold,
This "Rock of Ages" in the blue,
With outline sharp and bold.

When see! there flits a rosy light
O'er all the mountain crest;
Pulsating, tremulous it glows
And deepens in the west.

Yet while we look the shadows come
And draw the veil between,
One hardly knows and cannot tell
In words what has been seen.

We felt somehow that God was there
And spoke through nature's art;
For something in that beauteous scene
Touched deeply every heart.

The man was weak, the mountain cold,
Yet power divine was there,
Which made us know past doubt the truth
That God is everywhere.

EN PASSANT.

CHATTY, smiling, and gay,
Two ladies passed down the *rue ;*
They were very well dressed,
And much impressed
With a sense of importance, too.

Across on the other side,
Hung over the door, they see,
Where whoso may read
Who hath the need,
The sign of the "Day Nursery."

"A nursery here! oh! ah!
They keep cut flowers, I s'pose;"
And onward they passed,
Nor backward cast
One glance from their selfish repose.

Truly, sweet blossoms are these
Torn from a poor mother's heart,
Who, toiling outside,
Is satisfied
To live from her dear ones apart.

Love takes the transplanted rose
Guards it with tenderest care,
Though she suffers pain
Her loss is gain,
For her blossom grows strong and fair.

How often while passing through
This world when the tempests lower
Do we look to see
If possibly
We can shelter some storm-tossed flower?

THE MAN WITH THE HOE.

ART thinking he's not happy?
Don't waste thy pity so;
He loves to be up in the morning
And out at work with the hoe.

When all the birds are singing
And the air is fresh with dew,
'Tis the fullness of joy to be living
Where all around is new.

Listen, canst hear him whistling,
So soft and sweet and low?
And his hoe is sharp a-working
Lest weeds and thistles grow.

Tired, you say, when night comes?
His hands, his arms, his feet;
A goodly tired I'm thinking,
Which brings sleep deep and sweet.

There's Joe, I hear him coming,
Adown the road by the wall.
I must be ready waiting,
I would not have him call.

. . . . . .

Jeanie, my wife, my dear one,
I love thee; dost thou love me?
Dost think in all the wide world
There's aught for me or thee

Better than love and each other?
Canst wonder I'm proud of Joe?
Through life, through death, forever
I'll love the man with the hoe.

THE CLOVER.

GOD made a little tender plant,
We call it the clover green;
There's a leaf for love, and one for hope,
And a third for faith serene.

The three-leaf clover grows and grows
All about and over the way;
A perfect leaf and a perfect plan
Look wherever you may.

But the four-leaf clover is what we seek —
The fourth is for luck they say —
So we trample the others under our feet,
Or push them out of the way.

A DREAM.

(*Read at a meeting of Alumni of University of Washington in 1884.*)

THE shadowy hands of night-time,
With darkness weighted low,
Were resting upon an ocean,
Stilling its ebb and flow.

There was no light, no motion,
There was not any sound;
On everything had fallen
A silence most profound.

Still lay the form of a woman
On the rocks beside the sea;
Only a weary woman
On the brink of eternity.

Tired of life and its struggles,
She had come with her burden of grief
Down to the ocean, believing
In death she would find relief.

The solemn silence of nature,
So majestic in repose,
With a feeling of awe o'ercame her
As thoughts of the future arose.

Fearing the great hereafter,
Without any hope in life,
Helplessly, in the darkness,
Crushed, she lay by the strife.

Lo! the clouds are parted,
A light the darkness sends,
And a glorious form like an angel
On shining wings descends.

Raising the prostrate woman
With a tenderness born of love,
Soothing the weary spirit
With visions of rest above.

He placed in her hand a flower,
With petals so snowy and fair,
The fragrance from the blossom
With sweetness filled all the air.

"As long as thou keepest this token,
E'en though the rude winds blow,
The sweetness of hope," saith the angel,
"Shall vanquish every woe."

Then swiftly he winged his flight upward,
And the clouds hid the light again,
But the beautiful gift from heaven
Had quieted all the pain.

She turned to take up life's duties
With a strength which Hope brings to all,
Carefully guarding her flower
Lest evil should it befall.

Oft when treading the pathway,
Where the rocks were rugged and high,
The God-given blossom seemed sweeter,
And fairer it looked to the eye.

Journeying thus ever onward
With Hope's sweet token in view,
Behold, in the path before her,
A creature of blackest hue.

A glaring light plays around him
From a fire-ball held in his hand,
Whence flaming tongues like serpents
Fall writhing upon the sand.

Nearer he comes and yet nearer;
E'en the air round about seems to burn.
Alas! she cannot but meet him,
For whither has she to turn?

So, lifting her face toward heaven,
She pleadingly breathes the name
Of the loving and merciful angel,
Who promised to soothe all pain.

'Twas only a moment of waiting;
Close stood the fiend by her side,
His hand out-stretched for the blossom,
Whose beauty he jealously eyed.

His long, cruel fingers were closing
O'er the gift she held most dear.
She grasped it more firmly, unheeding,
Believing the angel would hear.

When soft, like a breath from heaven,
Cooling the heated air,
Up from the snowy petals
Rose the sweetest of perfumes rare.

O'ercome by the subtle fragrance,
With supernatural power
It stayed his hand from harming
Her wonderful, priceless flower.

And now the bright wings of morning
Sweep the darkness of night-time away,
In her hand still bearing Hope's blossom,
With a glad heart she welcomes the day.

RETURNED.

THEY sent back my little poem,
They couldn't use it; indeed
Only the best of poems
Would fill their magazine's need.

Their patrons were the best thinkers
Among intellectual men.
I fancy the theme of my poem
Was a little outside their ken.

It touched upon living duties,
The words came straight from the heart,
Simple and clear the meaning,
Not deeply hidden by art.

Disheartened by this? ah, indeed not,
For Longfellow was refused.
How often has budding genius
By editors been abused.

I'll just write them out another,
About transcendental things,
And the thoughts shall flutter so airy
On dainty gossamer wings.

I trow it will need a deep thinker,
A very intelligent mind,
To hunt about through the mazes
And the thread of my meaning find.

Then perhaps the Editor 'll soften,
And see in my little verse
The spark of a kindling genius
And take it for better or worse.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

OH, day of blest rejoicing,
A wingéd message thou
From Thee, God of our fathers,
To show thy children how
Thy hand is in the harvest,
That it is meet we pray,
Not idly pass in feasting
All of Thanksgiving Day.

WHAT IS LIFE?

WHAT is life?
Is it a strife
For social position?
A series of calls,
Of teas and of balls
At the Club on the list,
And nights of bridge whist;
Dinners of state,
Elegant plate,
Dress decolleté,
Lavish display?
Tell me, is life naught but show?
Back the answer comes, ah no!

What is life?
Is it a strife
For the sweets of pleasure?
The ball game, the race,
The dogs and the chase,
Hunting or wheeling,
Automobiling,
Operas, plays,
Passion's dark ways,

Wine and the dance,
The games of chance?
Is it life but to be gay?
Back the answer comes, nay, nay.

What is life?
Is it a strife
For money's possession?
Working early and late
To boom real estate,
To scheme and devise,
To corner supplies,
Inflate and extend
Stocks without end,
To grasp, or worse,
To fill the purse?
Is, then, life a search for gold?
No! the answer back is rolled.

What is life?
Is it a strife
For a name as fleeting?
To be known of men
Through the poet's pen,
Or in art to see
On one's work the *prix*,

Singers and song
Thrilling the throng,
Daring, doing,
Fame pursuing?
Is this life, a fame, a name?
Still the answer comes the same.

Life is more than fame or pleasure,
More than social place or treasure.
Life is not this selfish living;
But of self the constant giving
For the betterment of others.
Thus if life brings fame or treasure,
Social place or harmless pleasure,
'Twill but give an added joy
Other " talents " to employ
For the good of mankind. Brothers,
This is living life's true measure.

MARRIED.

THE words have been spoken,
The rites have been said;
The man and the maiden
Are legally wed.

Out into the future
Together they go;
The one with gay foot-step,
The other with slow.

The one in the sunshine
Of youth's happy light;
The other o'ershadowed
With on-coming night.

The one all unknowing,
With all life before;
The other a past, which
Has stood at Death's door.

And yet they have chosen
To walk hand in hand
Adown life's rough pathway
E'en unto Death's strand.

Has Love so united
With magical art
The one to the other,
Heart joined to heart,

That each will find pleasure,
Sufficient, complete,
In the life of the other,
And sympathy sweet?

If Love be not with them
Ah, bitter the way!
The empty heart's aching
No riches can stay.

TWO PICTURES.

COULD an artist, with deeper insight,
Paint the soul of a man from life,
A soul which had felt many conflicts,
Yet had conquered oft in the strife.

How the world would hasten to view it —
This great unknown first brought to light!
Eyes classic, æsthetic, and rustic
Would gaze on it long with delight.

And again, if beside this picture
Could another as true be displayed,
Revealing the soul of a mortal
By sin disgraced and betrayed,

How touching would be the contrast
In these pictures side by side!
The one full of subtlest beauty,
The other all grace denied.

Each heart would awaken responsive,
In reverence and in awe,
When in an old truth, familiar,
A strange new meaning each saw.

And all would remember the lesson
So vividly, silently learned,
Forgetful not of the future,
When their souls toward the light must be turned.

For more than the human the soul is,
Its essence is something divine,
And we know in a land eternal
This something we must resign

To the Author who caused its being,
Who placed his image thereon,
Then gave it into our keeping
To mould our own lives upon.

Can we know which our souls resemble,
Of these two pictures side by side:
The one full of subtlest beauty,
Or the other, where grace is denied?

Silence alone gives us answer;
None in his own strength can know,
Since only the light of the future
Illumines the soul with its glow.

Each little act leaves its impress
As the days and months pass away;
By scanning our past sincerely
We may guess how it looks to-day.

Have we, in the highways of duty,
Been as brave and true as we ought,
Upholding the hands of justice,
Though with danger the act was fraught?

Have we striven with zealous fervor
To inspire with a nobler air,
Those who have bowed down to pleasure,
Regardless of God's higher claim?

Have we shown, as often and clearly
As an earnest one only can,
That the dearest of all God's creatures,
Under heaven's blue arch, is man,

And the woe to him who ensnares him,
  Who binds him from foot-sole to crown,
Thus giving to shame and dishonor
  What God hath wrought for renown?

Then we know that something of beauty,
  Some Christ-like image is there;
Though seamed and marred by shortcomings,
  It still will remain wondrous fair.

CHANGING THE SITE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON.

MY Alma Mater, dost thou know
That thou from these dear walls must go
To seek a new abiding-place
Without the city gates apace?

They'll build thee beautiful and grand
And give thee great extent of land.
But say, wilt thou be satisfied
From all the past thy face to hide?

Dost thou not love thy little band,
Who, scattered now throughout the land,
Oft turn with tender thoughts to thee
And long the dear old place to see?

When forth thou goest, know full well
That saddened hearts will one day tell
How here we studied, here we read,
At Alma Mater's table fed.

This, once one vast expanse of green —
Yon mountain from the belfry seen
Looked finer to our youthful vision
Than any tale of land elysian.

Thou'lt find a newer place more fair,
But we shall never know thee there;
Tho' still thou callest us by name
'Twill never be to us the same.

Fond memories in thy new place
The old-time scene can ne'er retrace.
Thou goest forth: Time changes all;
We bow the head; the blow must fall.

THE ORGAN GRINDER.

ON the busy streets of a city
Sat a poor old man one day,
Grinding a song
For the passing throng
In a dull, mechanical way.

"May the heavenly muse protect us
From that shrill, discordant tune,"
Some said in scorn
As the notes were borne
Afar on the air of noon.

His box on the organ was empty,
The coins were few and small,
The sun was hot,
And the man forgot
As sleep made his eyelids fall.

They jostled along quite unheeding,
With restless, pattering feet;
Nature was kind,
Tho' all men were blind,
And passed him by in the street.

Dream fairies were hovering round him,
Soothing his tired brain,
And all looked bright
In a land of light,
Whence cometh no sorrow or pain.

He was king in a realm of beauty,
And sat on a throne of love,
His bitter tears
In the land of years
Formed a rainbow arch above.

Such joyous soul-stirring music
As floated adown the air,
Pulsated wings
Of myriad things
That were dancing everywhere.

Whence cometh these strains entrancing?
And whence this wingéd brood
Fluttering by,
Now low, now high,
Changing with each changing mood?

'Tis the labor of careless thousands
Who passed him by in the street,
  Toiling alway,
  By night and by day,
To make his pleasure complete.

REVERIE.

COME out of the shadows that deepen;
Thou art sad and wouldst hide thy grief.
Thou hast not grown old to me, New Year,
Thy days were indeed too brief.

New Year, thou cam'st to me bringing
New hopes, new purposes true.
Ah, Time, thou art ever flinging
Thy shadow o'er all the new!

My New Year, come close to me, listen;
I have taken thee into my heart;
I have need of thee ever beside me,
Of my life henceforth thou art part.

Teach me; I know thou art willing,
For a purpose thou gavest to me.
Together we'll seek its fulfilling
Through time to eternity.

CONSOLATION.

I HAVE seen him: the pain was not greater
Than my heart had strength to bear.
No one knew of the burning —
Ah! but the scar will be there.

Yet no one shall know of the paining,
Though a blackened ember lay,
E'en charred beyond all feeling,
Where throbs the heart to-day.

I know he is pledged to another;
I know that I shall not die
From sorrow — useless longing,
And other work have I.

It may be this trial will free me
From the sin of selfish desire,
For "gold tried in the furnace
Is not consumed by fire."

It may show the path of the helper,
  Who carries another's pain,
And always sees in lost things
  A more than equal gain.

Then when my life here is ended
  The happiness there will be
That this world was made better
  Because of even me.

A TRIPLET FOR THE CHILDREN.

THE SONG OF A NEST.

ONLY a tall green fir tree,
Only a little brown nest,
Only a patient mother
With two little eggs 'neath her breast.

Only a stone thrown slyly,
Only a crash in the tree,
Only a shout of laughter,
But ah! what do we see?

Only a lonely treetop,
No little soft brown nest,
Only a sorrowing mother
Hopeless and distressed.

MY PUSSY.

DEAR little Fluff, you're so dainty
And loving and soft and sweet;
You are just a little snowball
From the tips of your ears to your feet.

You are nicer than any snowball,
For that is cold and wet,
And you are a warm down pillow
To snuggle my cheek on, pet.

And you make me feel so happy
As you softly purr in my ear,
I call you my little music box,
My fluff ball, my precious, my dear.

MY DOG.

INTO the house comes Mascot,
A perfect whirlwind of legs.
I try to make him be quiet,
But he only jumps and begs

For me to come into the garden
Where we can frolic and play;
He's full of fun, is Mascot,
And it's hard to say him nay.

I pat and I whip and I scold him,
I tell him to "charge" and "be still,"
But he's always up and doing,
For he has his own little will.

He barks at the dogs and the children,
He worries the rats and the cat;
He's a terribly troublesome plaything,
But I love him for all of that.

FLAG RAISING.

Camp Kenloch.

HURRAH for the Stars and Stripes!
Pledge we ourselves anew
To our country's flag, which has never been down.
Here's to the red, white, and blue!

Hurrah for the Camp Kenloch!
Where friends are loyal and true,
Where hospitality reigns supreme;
Here's to the flag and to you!

THE GOOD-NIGHT.

THE lights are turned out, the prayers have been said,
Down on the pillows rests each little head;
Two little girlies with eyelids shut tight,
Take care of them, Father, all through the night.

They've been such good girlies, tho' the wind howled outside,
They've worked all the day time, and one shows with pride
A long hemstitched ruffle for a baby-doll's gown;
The other a sailboat on the bowl floating round.

They've practised so faithfully cannon and song,
And added their fractions with not a sum wrong;
The fishes, the bird, and the cat they have fed;
And baby doll undressed and tucked safe in bed.

Oh, dear little girlies, what a world full of care;
From buttoning your frock and tying your hair
To behaving at table, and eating with grace;
And always presenting both clean hands and face.

We are glad that we have you, we hold you so dear,
For without our two girlies 'twould be empty and drear.
May we do our whole duty by you every day.
O Heavenly Father, hear when we pray!

IN MEMORIAM.

CRUEL seems Death in his taking,
His life's work was just begun;
We cannot understand
Why it is that the hand
Was placed upon just this one.

. . . . . .

Tears, cease your useless flowing,
Ye could not stay his going,
The blow came all unknowing
Adown a bitter way.
While we are groping blindly,
God watcheth o'er us kindly,
Wherever we may stray.

. . . . . .

We're working out a mighty plan,
Which God thought ere the world began,
Ere yet the fire mist he cast
Out into regions boundless, vast,
So great the plan, we cannot see,
'Tis measured by eternity.

"LIFT UP THINE EYES."

THIS world is a beautiful, wonderful world,
If you stand on the heights to know,
Its fashion of mountains and rivers and seas,
Of trees and of all things that grow.

Around and around this beautiful world
Swings in a wonderful way
The night time, and darkness and shadows come,
And then follows sunlight and day.

And over and over the days come and go,
As it rolls down the orbit of time,
An elliptical path in the azure blue,
In a wonderful way and sublime.

But greater than all these wonderful things
Is the sun, which controls from afar
The movements of all this wide universe,
When the world's but a twinkling star.

Yet higher than all this beautiful world,
And more wonderful still than the sun,
Is the great white throne in heaven above,
The seat of the Holy One.

And around this wonderful sacred seat,
In grand processional tread,
May not the sun and its universe
By the power of God be led?

CREDO.

I BELIEVE: yes, I believe:
What joy, what peace serene,
To know that God our Father rules
In Heaven; on earth supreme.

I believe: yes, I believe:
That all things work for good
To those who seek believing
The world's great brotherhood.

I believe: yes, I believe:
'Tis hard to know or say,
But I believe when night is past
We'll find another day.

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